



United States Mint to Recreate a Masterpiece

March 13, 2008

WASHINGTON — United States Mint Director Ed Moy announced at a meeting today of the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee that the agency plans to recreate what many have called the nation's most beautiful coin ever minted—Augustus Saint-Gaudens' original ultra-high relief Liberty \$20 Gold Piece. The design will be featured on a collectible 24-karat coin intended for sale to the public in 2009. In preparing to mint this coin, the United States Mint will test the development of the second variation of Saint-Gaudens' design, the 27-millimeter, ultra-high relief coin with Roman numerals.

"We want to spur the highest level of artistic excellence in American coin design," said Director Moy. "Recreating thousands of Augustus Saint-Gaudens' ultra-high relief Double Eagles will be a defining moment in American coinage."

President Theodore Roosevelt selected Augustus Saint-Gaudens to improve the designs on the nation's coinage, and the sculptor's first task was redesigning gold coins.

Maintaining the full artistic integrity of the Saint-Gaudens design was an arduous undertaking in 1907. The United States Mint's first attempt—a 34-millimeter ultra-high relief coin with Roman numerals—required the coins to be 'squeezed' into a press and annealed numerous times. The coining process was impractical for mass production, and approximately 19 coins of this variety are known to exist. These coins are now mostly in private ownership.

The United States Mint's second attempt to produce Saint-Gaudens' design—a 27 millimeter, ultra-high relief coin with Roman numerals—was in fact two \$10 Gold Eagle planchets melded together. The resulting coins were twice as thick. The United States Mint had no authority to strike coins of this specification in 1907, so it melted all but two or perhaps three of these coins.

The United States Mint's third attempt—a high-relief, 34-millimeter coin with Roman numerals—produced a coin with reduced relief that required less metal flow to fill the design and was more practical for mass production. Approximately 12,000 coins were made for collection. Later, in 1907, an additional 361,000 coins with Arabic numerals and a lower relief were produced for circulation.

None of the 1907 variants bore the inscription, "IN GOD WE TRUST." The inscription, added in 1908, appears on the coin's reverse directly above the sun. Production of the Saint-Gaudens \$20 Gold Double Eagle continued until 1932. Production of the 1933 \$20 Gold Double Eagle ceased, and only one was ever lawfully issued – some 70 years later. The new coin will have the inscription "In God We Trust" in the same position as 1908, when the inscription first appeared with this design.

A variation of the Saint-Gaudens Double Eagle has been in production for the American Eagle Gold Coin product line since 1986.

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Press Inquiries: Office of Corporate Communications (202) 354-7222

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